

1-8. (CANCELED)

9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method for optimizing a kick-down upshift point  
speed optimization in a motor vehicle with an automatic transmission, comprising  
 determining each kick-down upswitch point as a function of at least one of a  
[[the]] load condition[[s]] and a road inclination as represented by a gradient of one of  
an engine output speed and a transmission output speed.

10. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to claim 9, comprising  
 adding a speed offset of appropriate sign (nd\_abkd) to the current upshift point as  
 a function of [[the]] an output speed gradient (ng\_ab) when a kick-down condition is  
 recognized by a transmission control system of the transmission.

11. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to claim 10, comprising  
 storing the variation of the speed offset of appropriate sign (nd\_abkd) ~~is stored~~ in [[the]]  
a transmission control system in the form of a characteristic line a separate  
characteristic line being stored for each upshift.

12. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to claim 10,  
 comprising using an absolute kick-down switching characteristic line for the  
 determination of the kick-down upshift point.

13. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to claim 10, comprising  
 determining [[the]] a target gear for the next upswitch upshift when a kick-down  
 condition is recognized and determining the transmission output speed gradient (ng\_ab)  
 and then calculating the speed offset (nd\_abkd), [[the]] delay times for individual gear  
changes being stored for application with temperature-dependent delay times being  
taken into account.

14. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to claim 10, comprising  
 calculating the value of the speed offset (nd\_abkd) and then recalculating this value as  
 a function of [[the]] an existing driver behavior, whereby [[the]] an upshift  
speed (n\_abkd) is adapted to [[the]] a driver's way of driving.

15. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method for kick-down upshift speed  
optimization in a motor vehicle with an automatic transmission, comprising:  
determining each kick-down upshift point as a function of an acceleration  
determined by a load condition and road inclination,  
adding a speed offset of appropriate sign (nd\_abkd) to the current upshift point  
as a function of an output speed gradient (ng\_ab) when a kick-down condition is  
recognized by a transmission control system of the transmission, by

calculating a first value of the speed offset (nd\_abkd), ♦  
recalculating the first value of the speed offset (nd\_abkd) as an ♦  
intermediate value of the speed offset as a function of an existing driver behavior, ♦  
whereby an upshift speed (n\_abkd) is adapted to a driver's way of driving, and ♦  
~~The method according to claim 14, comprising again recalculating the~~ ♦  
~~intermediate~~ value of the speed offset (nd\_abkd) as a final value of the speed offset as ♦  
a function of driver activity by multiplying a characteristic line of the speed offset ♦  
values (nd\_abkd) by a factor that depends on driver behavior.

16. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to claim 14, comprising ♦  
~~recalculating~~ determining the value of the speed offset (nd\_abkd) as a function of driver ♦  
activity by establishing characteristic lines of the speed offset values for each ♦  
characteristic type of driver, intermediate values being determined by averaging ♦  
between the driver types.

17. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method for a kick-down upshift speed ♦  
optimization in a motor vehicle with an automatic transmission as a function of road ♦  
inclination, comprising the steps of:

determining an output speed gradient (ng-ab) reflecting a road ♦  
inclination[[,]] ♦  
determining a speed offset (nd-abkd) dependent upon the output speed ♦  
gradient (ng-ab), and ♦  
applying the speed offset (nd-abkd) as an adjustment to the upshift point ♦  
speed such that [[an]] the engine will reach a maximum engine output speed at an ♦  
upshift point.

18. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 17, further comprising ♦  
the step of further determining the output speed gradient (ng0ab) and the speed offset ♦  
(nd-abkd) based upon a vehicle load condition which is derived from one of a ♦  
corresponding curve and value stored in a transmission control system.

19. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) A method for kick-down upshift speed ♦  
optimization in a motor vehicle with an automatic transmission as a function of road ♦  
inclination, comprising the steps of:

determining an output speed gradient (ng-ab) reflecting a road inclination,

determining a speed offset (nd-abkd), dependent upon the output speed gradient (ng-ab), such that an engine will reach a maximum engine output speed at an upshift point, and

altering the upshift speed according to the speed offset (nd-abkd) so that the upshift occurs at a time the engine output speed reaches the maximum engine output speed.

20. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 19, further comprising the step of further determining the output speed gradient (ng-ab) and the speed offset (nd-abkd) based upon a vehicle load condition which is derived from one of a corresponding curve and value stored in a transmission control system.